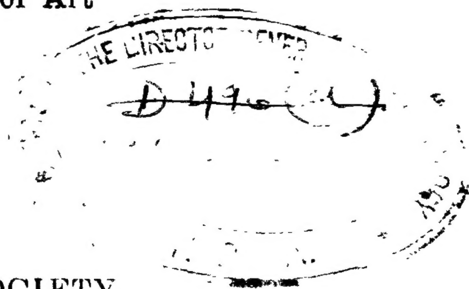

OF THE DIRECTOR GENE
INDI

Varendra Research Society's Monographs

No. 3

Kalidas Datta.

CONTENTS



VARENDRA RESEARCH SOCIETY
RAJSHAHI, BENGAL

April, 1930.

Rs. 3.

NOTE

The articles included in this number of our *Monographs* appeared originally as Appendices to our *Annual Reports* for the years 1926-27, 1927-28 and 1928-29 respectively. They are found to be of permanent interest, and are issued in this form so as to be easily accessible to scholars.

Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi.
April, 1930.

BIJAYNATH SARKAR,
Hony. Secretary.

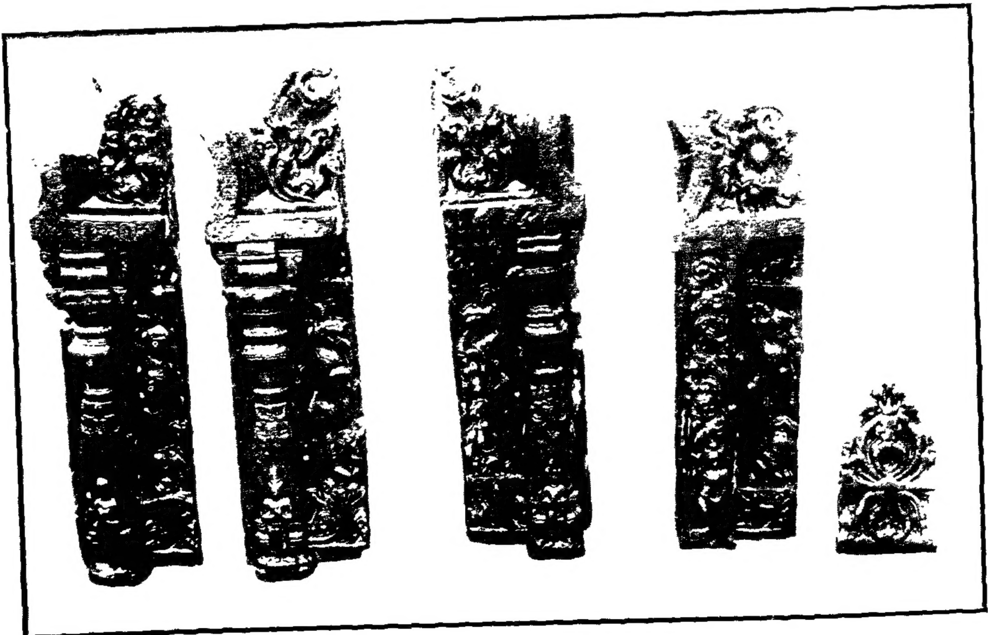
Published by Bijaynath Sarkar, Hon. Secretary
Varendra Research Society
Rajshahi, Bengal.
Printed by Jyotish Chandra Ghosh, at the Cotton Press
57, Harrison Road, Calcutta.



1. Vishnu from Gajmuri



3. Pursvanath from Raidighi



2. Carved Stones from Gajmuri

I The Antiquites of Khari.

By Kalidas Dutt, Majilpur, 24-Parganas District.

Of the five copper-plate grants of Lakshmanasena known to us, two were found south of Calcutta in the tract popularly called the Sundarban.

Of these two, one was discovered, in 1923, by Babu Nabin Chandra Bandopadhaya in digging a tank in Govindapur, a village which bears No. 28 in the jurisdiction list of Sonarpur Police Station and is situated some 3 miles north-west of Baruipur Railway station and 15 miles south of Calcutta. This find-spot lies *west* of the old course of the Ganges and falls in the ancient *Vardhamāna bhukti* in which the village granted, Viḍḍāraśāsana was situated, the Ganges forming half its eastern boundary (*Inscription of Bengal*, III p. 97).

The other grant generally known as the Jaynagar or Sundarban grant was discovered, about the year 1868, by the late Babu Haridas Dutt of Majilpur in digging a tank in the village of Bakultala, Lot No. 22, some 40 miles south of Calcutta and 10 miles south of Jaynagar-Majilpur Railway Station. This findspot lies to the *east* of the old course of the Ganges and was included in the old Khāḍī maṇḍala of *Paundravardhana-bhukti*, in which the village granted, Mandalagrāma was situated (*Inscription of Bengal*, III, p. 170). I shall refer to this grant in detail in a later paragraph.

From these two grants as well as the Naihati grant of Vallālasena and the Barrackpur grant of Vijayasena we learn that in those days, the Ganges divided the two divisions or *bhuktis* of lower Bengal, the land to the west of it forming the *Vardhamāna-bhukti* and that to the east the *Pauṇḍravardhana-bhukti* The Southern portion of the latter was called Khāḍī maṇḍala (according to the Jaynagar grant) or Khāḍī vishaya (according to the Barrackpur grant). The name is evidently preserved in the names of the modern village of Khari, a little to the north-east of Bakultala and the Khari Pargana of 24-Parganas District.

Ancient Adminstrative Divisions

From the inscriptions discovered in different parts of Bengal we find that, before the Muslim rule, the country was divided for purposes of administration into 'bhuktis' or divisions. These were subdivided into 'Maṇḍalas' or districts, and the latter again into 'vishayas' or sub-divisions. The ruler over a maṇḍala was styled 'Maṇḍaleśvara' or 'Maṇḍalādhipa' and stood as a vassal in relation

to his sovereign who bore the title of 'Paramesvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahā-rājādhirāja.'

We find in Vol. I of the 8th Chapter (*Mandala yoni*) of the *Kāmandakiya Nîtisāra* that the Maṇḍalādhipa ruled from a fort, providing himself with a treasury and an army and courtiers and ministers :—

Upetaḥ kosha-daṇḍābhyām s=āmītyaḥ saha mantribhiḥ |
Durgasthaś=chintayet sādhu maṇḍalam maṇḍalādhipaḥ ||

In Chapter 86 (*Srîkrishna-janma-khanda*) of the *Brahma-vaivarta-purāna* we find that a Maṇḍalesvara held sway over four hundred yoyanas i.e. 3200 miles circuit and bore the title of 'Rājā' :—

Chatur=yojana-paryantaṁ=adhikāraṁ nripasya cha |
Yo rājā tach=chhataguṇaḥ sa eva maṇḍaleśvaraḥ ||

The Sundarban in olden days.

The Khāḍī maṇḍala of those days must have included a much wider area than the present pargana of that name. It included probably the whole of the 'Sundarban' part of the 24-Parganas, east of the old course of the Ganges, called now the *Gangār Bādā* (or, at places, Ādi Gangā). The course lay past Kalighat, Russa, Vaishnavaghata, Rajpur, Malancha Mainagar, Baruipur, Sasan, Suryapur, Nachangacha, Mulati, Jangalia, Dakshin-Barasat, Sarisadah, Jaynagar, Vishnupur, Chhatrabhog, etc. on to the sea near the Sagar Island which is still held sacred.

This is the course indicated in the *Raymangal* of Krishnaram and other old Bengali works. *vide* the descriptions of Chaitanya's journey towards Puri in the *Chaitanya-bhagavata* of Vrindavandas, Chand Saudagar's voyages in the *Mansār Bhāsān* of Vipradas Chakravarti, and Dhanapati and Srimanta's voyages in the *Chandi* of Kavikankan Mukundaram. Even in the map prepared by De Barros in 1540, the Ganges is shown as flowing southwards past Khari before turning westwards.

Thus the tract of country south of Calcutta and now called the Sundarban was once traversed by the lower reach of the Ganges, then probably the only high-way for the sea-borne trade of the rich Ganges valley. This circumstance must have conduced to its wealth and prosperity. How this prosperity was swept away and the tract became depopulated and overgrown with dense forest is not known. The reason may be political convulsion or, more probably, some cataclysm of nature which devastated the tract and caused the Ganges to leave its course. (*Gazetteer, 24-Parganas*, p. 15).

Its ancient Prosperity

Evidence, however, of the prosperity which this tract once enjoyed is daily gaining strength. As the jungle is being cleared or old tanks re-excavated we are finding remains of brick-built houses and temples, stone and bronze images of Hindu and even Jaina and Buddhist gods and goddesses, inscriptions, coins and other antiquities. One of the earliest finds in this tract was a hoard of Gupta coins discovered at Kalighat about 1783 (Warren Hastings's time) 'which laid the foundations of the Gupta collection of the British Museum' (Allan, p. xi). A Vishnu image $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high was 'dragged up from the bed of the Saraswati river in the Bengal Sunderban and presented to the Indian Museum by J. H. Reily, Esq., 25th January, 1877' (Anderson's *Catalogue* p. 244, Sn. 1 ; see also *Pravasi*, 1335 B.S., Agrahayana, opposite p. 197). Another fine Vishnu image 5 ft. high was discovered at Sarisādah (near Dakshin—Barasat) and is now in the Indian Museum (No. 2592, Bloch, *Supplementary Catalogue* p. 81 ; see Fig. 14, or *Bharatavarsa* 1334 B.S. Sravana p. 201).

Last year a Nrisinha image (Fig. 16) was taken from the same place to the Indian Museum by Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda along with two images from the west side of the Bada *viz.* a Kuvera image from Krishnachandrapur (near Chhatrabhog) and a Garuda capital from Jalghata. Many other images and antiquities have been found, some of which may be seen in the locality. Of finds of more definite character, two copper-plate inscriptions as already noted, and some stone inscriptions are known to have been discovered in this area but they disappeared before they could be properly deciphered and published.

I have described many of the antiquities of Sundarban in certain Bengali monthlies, *viz. Basumati* for Jyaistha, Kartika, and Magh, 1334 B.S. ; and *Bharatavarsa* for Sravan 1334 B.S. The present is a systematic account of the antiquities of Khari and the adjoining settlements east of the Bada : those of the area to its west (which fell in ancient Vardhamana-bhukti) will be dealt with in another article.

Khari

The village Khari includes Khari, Gajmuri and other hamlets and bears Tauji No. 93 of the 24-Parganas collectorate. It lies in P. S. Mathurapur, about 4 miles south of the Police station across the Bada. It is said to have been reclaimed about the middle of the 19th century after a forest fire, when ruins of brickbuilt houses and temples and of tanks were exposed to view. The Revenue Survey Report of 1857 mentions the existence of several ruined temples

and two huge tanks in the area, and Hunter refers to them in his *Statistical* Account, Vol. I, p. 235 thus :--

"In the Sundarban jungles just south of this fiscal division (Khari) are the remains of several temples, and the Revenue Surveyor in 1857 found the sites of two very large tanks dry and over-grown with jungles, and surrounded by mounds and embankments from thirty to forty feet in height. No clue could be obtained from the surrounding villagers as to their history."

Even now there is a heap of bricks north-west of the village, from which, it is said, Pratapaditya of Jessore removed two images, one of which he installed as Radha-ballava at Jaynagar and the other as Syam-sundara at Durgapur P. S. Jaynagar, *vide, List of Ancient Monuments in the Presidency Division*, p.p. 2 to 4.

In the Gajmuri section of the village there are in the house of Jadunath Thakur a Vishnu image about 3 ft. high found in excavating a tank, (Fig.1) and some fine architectural pieces of black stone (Fig. 2). The Vishnu image is of the usual four-armed type, holding a 'sankha' in the lower right hand, a 'padma' in the upper right hand, a 'gada' in the upper left and a 'chakra, in the lower left hand and is to be classed as a Nārāyana according to the *Agnipurana*. The architectural pieces are rare and interesting relics and are each about 2 ft. high.

Lot No. 22. Bakultala

In this lot was found about the year 1868 a most important historical document, a copper-plate grant of Lakshmanasena. The plate unfortunately disappeared soon after its discovery, but thanks to a reading of it published by the late Ramgati Nyayaratna in his *Vanga bhasa o Sahitya vishayak Prastav* it has been possible to reconstruct the text. By this grant Lakshamanasena gave away, in year 2 of his reign, a plot of land in the village of Maṇḍalagrāma in the Kantallapura chaturaka of the Khāḍī maṇḍala of the Pauṇḍravardhana-bhukti. The Southern boundary of the plot is given as Chitadikhata which can be easily identified with the Chitadi-khal of the present settlement (*Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, p. 170).

Lot No. 23. Baribhanga

This settlement lying north of Khari derives its name from the extensive ruins of brick-built houses which occur here. Of the many stone images unearthened from the ruins, a Daśabhuja (Durgā) image and three Vishnu images are still in the village.

Lot No. 24. Raidighi.

This settlement lies south of Lot 23 and is bounded on the east and south by a stream. According to its present owner, Babu Baradaprasad Ray Choudhuri it derives its name from a tank dug in the dry bed of a very large old tank by his ancestor Sitaram Ray the first lessee of the settlement. The old tank bed measures 110 bighas according to recent survey. The story which seeks to connect the name with a 'Raigarh' fort of Pratapaditya (Satischandra Mitra, *Jessore Khulnar Itihas* II, p. 201) is an improbable one. A stone slab inscribed in sanskrit is reported to have been discovered in this tank. It was probably seen by Mr. Nakuleswar Bhattacharya of Kalighat and is referred to by him in his novel *Kumudananda*. The stone unfortunately is not now traceable.

Another important find which also has disappeared is a Buddha image referred to in a paper on 'the Geology of Sundarban,' read at the Sahitya Sanmilana at Burdwan (1915) by the late Sureschandra Dutt of Usti. Diamond Harbour Sub-Division.

The river Raidighi Gang which bounds the settlement on the east and connects the Moni river with the Chhatua is studded with ruins on both banks. About the year 1880, a fine blackstone 'Digambar' image of the 23rd Jain Tirthankar, Parsvanath was found in the river by a fisherman and removed to Bolbamni, P. S. Matla, where it may be seen now under a Tamarind tree in the fishermen's quarters being worshipped as 'Dharmathakur.' The image which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high (Fig. 3) represents the Tirthankara as standing naked with an umbrella surmounting a many-hooded snake-head spread over his head. On either side of the umbrella is a drum, below which is a female figure carrying a garland. On either side of the image is a male figure carrying a 'chowri,' standing on a lotus. Between them and the Tirthankara, as well as on the pedestal snakes are carved, the emblem of Parsvanath.

Two other Jain images have been collected by me in this tract. One is a miniature stone Śvetāmvara image of Naminath the 21st Tirthankara found in plot E, Patharpratima, P. S. Mathurapur, some 14 miles S. W. of Raidighi. The image is a thin one, 4 in. high and $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. wide. The head has disappeared; the figure is a standing one and bears marks of drapery. On its right is carved a lotus, the emblem of the 21st Tirthankara.

The other is a 'Digamvara' image of Ādinātha (Fig. 4) the first Tirthankara, dug out of an old tank at Ghateswar, some 11 miles N. W. of Raidighi. This sculpture is 3 ft. 5 in. high and 1 ft. 9 in. broad and represents the Tirthankara

as standing naked. This stone is much weathered and a big bit of the upper corner on the right hand and a bit of the lower corner on the left are gone but we can trace the standing effigies of the twelve Tirthankaras on the right and twelve on the left side of the image. On each side is a male attendant standing on a lotus with three small seated figures beyond them. In the pedestal is the figure of a bull. the emblem of Ādinātha.

Lot No 26. Kankandighi.

East of Raidighi across the Gang is Lot No. 26, called Kankandighi. The Southern portion of the Lot is still under forest, but the northern portion which has been cleared reveals a number of dried up tanks and brick mounds. Three of the mounds called respectively Gajgirir bāṭi, Pilkhānār bāṭi and Śvetrājār bāṭi. especially the last one. are pretty large. Several stone pillars, door jambs and other sculptures have been found here. One of these, a remarkable stone image of Vishnu some 5 ft. high and richly carved, is now in the house of a cultivator in the Srifaltali section of the village. Another is a Navagraha slab (Fig. 5) 3′ 3″ long and 1′ 7″ high. which is with me. It was the practice in olden days to use such slabs as lintels over entrances to temples.

Lot No 116. Jatar Deul

This lot lies east of Kankandighi. Its central portion is still under forest. But the clearing of the northern portion reveals a remarkable structure known as the Jatar Deul (Fig. 6). It towers nearly 100 ft. above the plain and is a striking land-mark in this part of the country. It is said that one Mr. Smith took a lease of this Lot in the seventies of the 19th century and knocked down the top of the tower, to search for treasure. It has recently been brought under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. and repaired by Government.

The tower is square in plan with rectangular projections in the middle of each face. The entrance which is on the east is 9½ ft. wide and is spanned by a pointed arch. The inside is about 10 ft. square and the walls are about 10 ft. thick. No plinth is visible and the floor is some six feet below the present level of the ground, and is reached by a flight of steps. Inside the tower, are brackets built into the wall

The tower is built of thin bricks laid in a cement of black colour, and decorated with carved bricks some of which have fallen off. There is a large well N. E. of the tower, and a heap of old bricks to its north. which is said to cover the ruins of an old room.

There is no trace of any image or of worship in the tower. What purpose it served is now a matter of conjecture. Some persons object to its being taken as a Hindu temple on account of the entrance being on the east. But this objection is untenable as entrances on this side are prescribed in the *Hayasirsha Pancharātra see Sabda Kalpadruma,* under '*mandir.*' Hunter says, "In Lot No. 116 the ruins are said to be Buddhistic" *Stastical Account* I, p. 381, but gives no reason for his statement. Mr. Satischandra Mitra opines that the tower is 400 to 500 years old and is a tower of victory, probably of Pratapaditya (*Jessore-Khulnar Itihas* I, p. 69 and II, p. 201) but gives no evidence or reason in support of his opinion.

Regarding its present name of Jatar-deul two legends are current. One is that this tract was frequented by a tiger which had a *jatā*, or a clotted fur. The second one which is referred to in the *List of Ancient Momnuents in the Presidency Division* is that the tower held a Śiva image known as 'Jatadhari.'

The only historical evidence that we know of is a copper-plate said to have been discovered at this site and referred to in the *List of Monuments,* p. 3 as follows :

"The Deputy Collector of Diamond Harbour reported in 1875 that a copper-plate discovered in a place a little to the north of Jatar Deul fixes the date of the erection of this temple by Raja Jayanta Chandra in the year 897 of the Bengali Sak era corresponding to A.D. 975. The copper-plate was discovered at the clearing of the jungle by the grantee Durga Prosad Choudhury. The inscription is in Sanskrit and the date as usual was given in an enigma with the name of the founder."

Unfortunately no trace is now available of this copper-plate nor does the name of King Jayanta Chandra occur in any other known inscription or historical record.

The tower bears a striking resemblance to a similar tower on the south bank of the Ajay river near Kenduli, which is known as Ichhai Ghosher Deul (Fig. 7) (*Birbhum Vivarana*, pt. 1, p. 230). This Ichhai Ghosh is said to have lived at the time of Devapala, the son and successor of king Dharmmapala of Gauḍa, and the Jatar Deul may possibly be ascribed to that age. In the Mungir as well as the Nalanda plates of Devapala it is said of Gopala that 'having conquered the Earth reaching upto the sea and considering that his elephants would now be a useless burden, he set them free' (V. 3) and of Dharmmapala that 'the servants of the king........performed religious observances at the spot where the Ganges meets the sea' (V. 7), *Gaudalekhamala* p. 42 and *V. R. S. Monograph*

No. 1. So, possibly this part of Bengal came early under the sway of the Pāla kings and the two towers represent the architectural skill which marked that period of their rule. Both the towers though built of brick remind us of the Orissian style of architecture as displayed, for example, in the Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneswar. The entrance to the Jatar Deul with its pointed arch differs from the rectangular entrances of the Orissa temples—but this difference, as Mr. Havell says may be due to the Bengal architects having to use bricks instead of stones. Comparing the style of these towers with the present day style of temple construction on the model of thatched huts, it may be concluded that the latter style originated long after the Pāla period.

Some copper-coins of a new type have been found in 1928 near this site. One of these weighs about 1¼ tola, is roughly circular in shape and measures about 1″ in width. On one side is the figure of an elephant with a rider on its back. On the other side are indistinct marks.

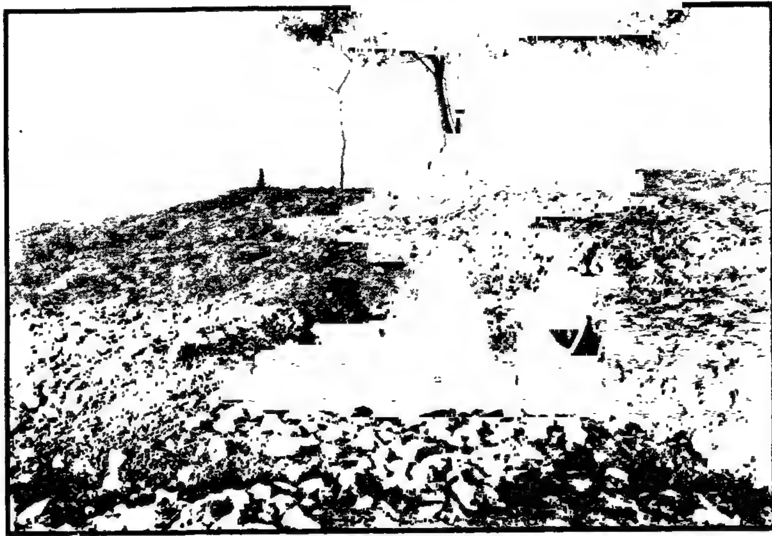
Near the Deul two fragments of stone were dug out marked with floral decorations and so me figures. They were lying in the zemindar's Kutchery till 1928 when they were removed by Mr. Birge, Settlement Officer, for decipherment of the inscriptions which are said to be carved on them.

In this lot are two brick mounds, one to the west of the Deul and on the east bank of the Chhatua Nadi and the other, some ½ a mile south of the Deul. These mounds are about 25 ft. high and stand over an acre of ground each and are composed of bricks much larger than the modern ones.

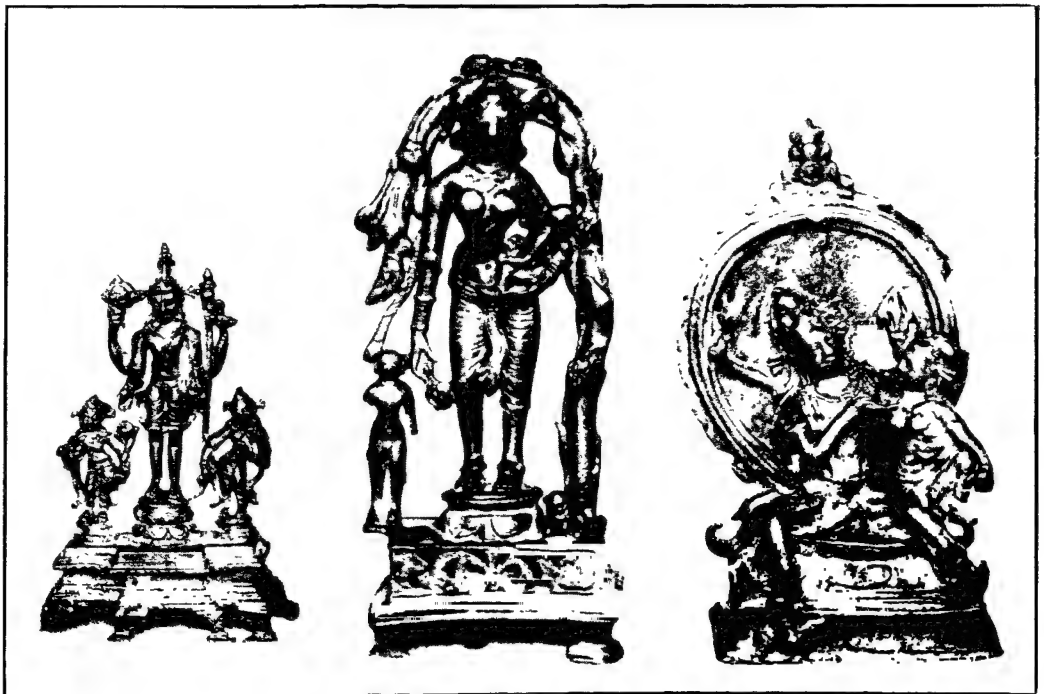
Lot. No. 29 - Nalgora

North of Jatar Deul across the Moni is Lot No. 29, called Nalgora, in which several brick mounds have been exposed, the largest one being called the Maṭh-bāri. It is about 30 ft. high and stands over an acre of ground. Recently one Rakhal Haldar dug into it and exposed a thick wall to view (Fig. 8). A large old tank covering some 40 bighas of ground with banks 30 ft. high has also been discovered in this Lot.

A little to the north of the Maṭh-bāri have been discovered five miniature bronze images (Figs. 9, 10 and 11), two miniature stone images and an unique stone sculpture shaped like a swan (Fig. 12). Of the bronzes, two represent Vishnu, two Hāriti and one Umā-Maheśvara. Of the two stone miniatures, none of which I can identify, one is a male figure and the other a female one. Two of the bronzes are with me, viz. a Vishnu 13 in. high and Hariti 3½ in. high.



8. Math-bari Mound at Nalgora



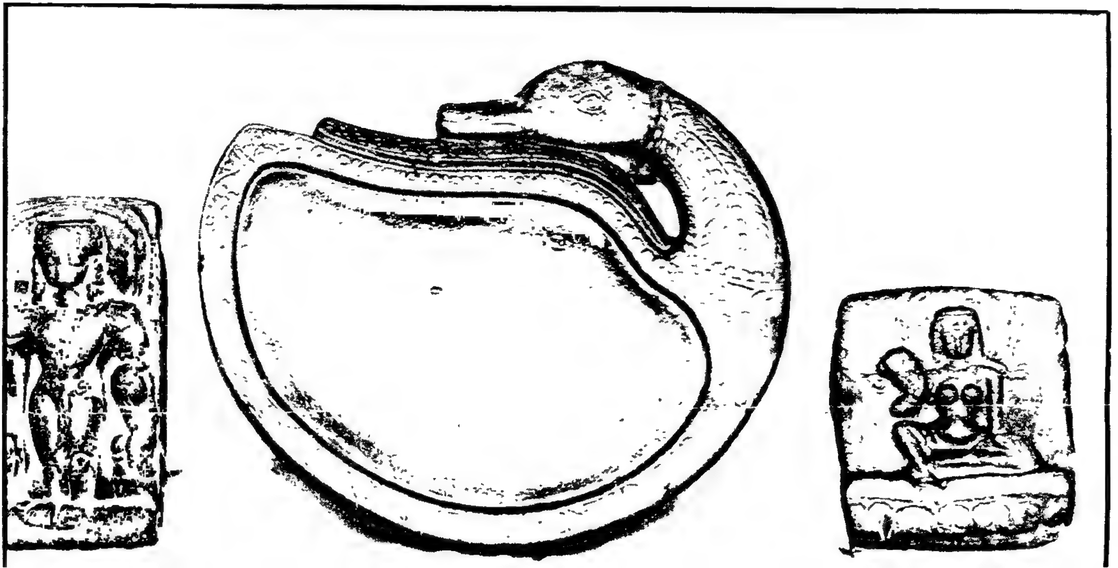
9. Bronze images from Nalgora



10. Vishnu from Nalgora



11. Hariti from Nalgora



Lot No. 28 Manirtat.

It lies to the north of Nalgora and abuts on the Moni river. Of the ruins exposed here the most remarkable is a huge rampart wall which is called Jainarain Hathir Garh, cut into 3 lengths by the river. The first one is 5 miles long, 135 ft. wide and 25 ft. high and ends on the Moni river at a place which is called Dhasbhāngā or the 'Breach' (Fig. 13). The second one lies between this breach and the northern boundary of Lot No. 29 Nalgora where there is a second breach. It is 2 miles long, 142 ft. broad and 30 ft. high. The third one lies on the west side of the river in Lot No. 14. Radhakantapur, adjoining Khāri. It is 1 mile long, 145 ft. broad and 40 ft. high. It is said that when the plot was given over for settlement this rampart was over-grown with tall trees of Myrabolam, Banyan etc. Mr. Satischandra Mitra opines that this rampart is the remains of a fort of king Pratapaditya, which he calls Moni-durga after the Moni river close by. There is no authority for this opinion. On the contrary the nature of the ruins and the old bronze and stone images found in Nalgora close to the second breach leave little doubt that the structure must be of a much earlier date.

Antiquities east of Khari.

The above forms a compact group of settlements round Khāri between the Bādā or old course of the Ganges, and the Thākurāni river. Equally interesting antiquities have been discovered to the north of this area, but before describing them I shall refer to a few places east of the Thākurāni river.

Lot No. 117 - Maipit.

This lot lies south-east of Lot No. 116 Jaṭār Deul across the Thākurānī river, near the bank of which a huge brick mound has been exposed to view. The lot is for the most part yet unreclaimed.

Lot No. 122 - Madhabpur & Delbari.

North of Lot No. 117 (Maipit) is Lot No. 119 to the north of which and separated by a river lies Lot No. 122. Many ruined brick structures, tanks and wells have been discovered, the most prominent being a huge mound in Madhabpur, from which a fine bronze image of Simha-vāhinī (Durgā) and some stone sculptures have been dug out. In the neighbouring settlement of Delbari have been revealed a brick-built ghat and two brick temples—which though much dilapidated appear to be of modern style.

This lot and lot No. 123 border on the Matla river which here divides the Mathurapur P. S. of Alipur Sub-Division from the Sandeskhali P. S. of Basirhat Sub-Division.

Lots No. Garan-Basu & 128 Bharatgarh.

The first settlements we meet beyond the Matla are plots No. 127 and 128 between which flow the Sialfeli Khal connecting the Matla with the Vidyā Nadī.

The greater part of Lot No. 127 is still unreclaimed. In its northern part. near the west bank of the Khāl a big brick mound locally known as Biriñchir mandir has been discovered.

East of the Khāl and in Lot No. 128 are the remains of the rampart and moat of an old fort which is known as the Bharat-garh and has given its name to the Lot. At some distance from it is a big mound of bricks from which 2 or 3 stone images were discovered some time ago. It is known as Bharat Rajar Mandir. In the neighbouring district of Khulna some 12 miles south of Daulatpur and on the bank of the Bhadra Nadi is a huge brick mound called Bharat Bhayna (see Mr. Dikshit's report, *Jessore Khulner Itihas* II, p. 871). Possibly both the mounds are ascribed to the same person.

Mr. Satischandra Mitra opines that in the period of anarchy which preceded the Pāla rule, there was a king named Bharata in this part of the country after whom the mounds are named. (*Itihas* II,p. 199). But there is no proof or authority in support of this opinion.

In the mound called Bharat Rajar Mandir two or three stone sculptures were discovered sometime ago. One of these which is being worshipped as 'Panchanan' is an image of Buddha. From this some people think that the mound is the remains of a Buddhist structure. This is very probable as some 30 miles north of this spot is Balanda, P. S. Haroa, Basirhat Sub-Division, which MM. Haraprasad Sastri identifies with Bāla-Balabhi of ancient days and Bāgdi of later date. (*Rāmacharitam*, Introduction, p. 14). From his address to the Sāhitya Sanmilana at Calcutta (*Mānasi*. Vaisākh, 1321, B.S,) we learn that about 1000 years ago, there were numerous Buddhist viharas in the tract now known as the 24-Parganas District, where Buddhist monks wrote their works and preached their faith, and that in the now insignificant parganas of Hatiaghar and Balanda, there were viharas where the monks studied the *Pragnāpāramitā*.

Lots No. 129 Harbhanga & No 130.

These lie to the north of Lot No. 128. In each of them a large tank has been exposed, that in the latter plot being called Galaidariar pukhur.

Neti Dhopani Nadi.

Some ten miles south of Bharatgarh and forming the southern boundary of Lot No. 157, in Sandeshkhali P. S. is a stream flowing from west to east, which is known as Neti Dhopani Nadi. This name is connected with the legend of the death-defying devotion of Behulā and the introduction of the worship of the snake goddess Manasā which forms the theme of so many old Bengali poems.

Mr. Dineschandra Sen enumerates the names of some sixty authors of such poems most of whom flourished, according to him, some 300 years ago the most prominent being Kshemānanda, Vipradās, Vijayagupta (*Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 292 et seq.). Other streams in other parts of Bengal claim this name, but it is to be noted that most of the poems mentioned speak of merchant Chand's vessels trading in the Sundarban and it is therefore not unreasonable to connect this stream with the Legend.

In both Rennell's Atlas of 1778 and Ellison's Map of Sundarban of 1873, the stream is named Neti Dhopani Nadi.

Antiquities North of khari
Lots 30, 32 & 33 Baishata.

Coming back to the west of the Thakurani river we have Lots 30, 32 and 33 lying north of Lot No. 28, where big old rampart has been discovered. On the north of a little stream called the Nalua Gang and in the settlement known as Ghosher chak is a mound called Maṭhbāri which is about 40 ft. high and stands over nearly 2 acres of ground. This is evidently the structure shewn as the *Pagoda* in Rennell's Atlas of 1778, when probably it was not so dilapidated as at present. Some years ago the late Sarat Chandra Ghosh of Majilpur dug into this mound and unearthed 2 or 3 stone images of Mahishamardini and some stone jambs and lintels, one of which was inscribed. This stone subsequently fell into the tank of the neighbouring Kutchery. In the dry season of 1928 I made an effort to raise the stone but failed on account of the depth of water.

Near this mound is a smaller one and further on in the settlement of Krishnanagar is a bigger mound. the bottom portion of which is still intact, the upper part being denuded of bricks to build a neighbouring Kutchery. Babu Sivadas Dutt of Majilpur, the present owner says that this was done in his father's time in the seventies of the 19th Century, and that some stone images and other relics were discovered of which unfortunately no trace can be had at present.

Khania –Shahzadpur

This village lies on the old course of the Ganges some six miles north of Baishata, and close to Jayanagar-Majilpur. It is said that in the pre-Muslim days there was a settlement of over 400 Chattopadhyaya Brahmans in this village. Their descendants are now known as 'Khaner Chatturye'. Lately one Tarak Sardar has found some stone images and stone vessels when digging in his garden at this place.

Sarisadah

Some 4 miles north of Majilpur and on the east bank of the old course of the Ganges near Dakshin-Barasat Railway Station is Sarisadah from which as noted before a fine Vishnu image (Fig. 14) 5 ft. high was taken to the Calcutta Museum (No. 2592). 'It is an excellent work of the chisel carved out of a very hard basalt stone' (Bloch, *Supplementary Catalogue*, p. 81).

According to the *Visnu-dharmottara* of Hemādri, the image is to be classed as Vāsudeva, the male attendant on its left (a personified Chakra) as Lambodara and the female attendant on its right (a personified Gadā) as Sulochanā.

Near the spot where the Vishnu image was discovered a monolithic pillar about 10 ft. long (Fig. 15) is lying. It is said that some more pillars of this sort lie buried at the spot. They probably formed parts of the temple for the Vishnu image. Close by are the remains of an old ghāt.

Near this place, in the tank of the Kutchery of the late Babu Surendra Nath Dutt of Majilpur, a stone image of Nrisimha (Fig. 16) 2 ft. high was unearthed which is now in the Calcutta Museum. Another find at this place is a Śiva-lingam some three feet high of hexagonal base with its Gaurī-paṭṭa of black stone.

To the north of this place is a settlement where there is a number of Muslim tombs from which it is called Kazirdanga. Here I have found a stone medallion or 'chakra' of quite a novel design bearing a figure of Vishnu dancing on Garuḍa in the centre (Fig. 18). The border consists of two rings of floral design with twelve lozenge-shaped spokes between. The medallion is of 1 ft. 6 in. diameter and is carved exactly alike on its two faces and stands on a base shaped like the lotus capital of a pillar. The sculpture represents Vishnu in the attitude of a dance with the legs bent and the upper two hands raised above the head as if clapping, while the lower two hold respectively a 'gada' and a 'chakra.' As no-where else is Vishnu represented as dancing, this sculpture is a unique one.



16. Nrisimha from Sarisadah



17. Surya from Kasinagar



18. Vishnu Chakra from Kazirdanga

Vishnu is decorated with the Vanamālā, earrings and armlets and a 'turban' on the head. Garuḍa is represented as kneeling with folded hands and wings outspread, over which Vishnu is dancing.

Kasipur

Some three miles east of Sarisadah is Kasipur, from which I have collected in March 1929 a Surya image (Fig. 17). The image is 2 ft. 6 in. high and 1 ft. 1 in. broad and appears to be of an early date, bearing a striking resemblance with the image from Deora, Bogra Dist. (Varendra Research Society's *Annual Report*, 1927-28, Museum No. 693).

Dwarir Jangal

East of Sarisadah is an old high way called Dwarir Jangal. It may be traced from Kalighat along the east bank of the old Ganges to Chhatrabhog where it passes on to the west bank ending some miles lower down. It was a part of the old pilgrim route from Hardwar where the Ganges debouches from the Himalayas to Sagar, the holy spot where it meets the Sea. We learn from the *Chaitanya-bhāgavata* of Vrindavanadas and *Chaitanya-charitamrita* of Kaviraj Gosvami (16th century) that Chaitanya followed this route from Atisara (near Baruipur) to Chhatrabhog, where he took a boat for Puri. This road fell into disuse after the construction of the Kulpi road during British Rule.

Antiquities South of Khari

Even on the new settlements far south of Raidighi —*viz.* plot E (Patharpratima from which a miniature Jain image has been collected by me as already noted), Plot F (Rakshasa-khali), Plot G (Burirtat), Plot H and Lot No. 114, several large stone images and remains of brick built houses and even stone inscriptions are said to have been discovered, showing that the whole tract down to the sea was once the home of a wealthy and prosperous people.

Here I close my account of the antiquities of Khari. The tract west of the old course of the Ganges will form the subject of another article.

[Reprinted, with permission, from *Modern Review*, February, 1929]

II. A new type of Vishnu from North Bengal.

By Nani Gopal Majumdar, M.A.

In the fine collection of sculptures presented by Kumar Sarat Kumar Ray, M.A. of Dighapatiya to the Rajshahi Museum in 1926 there is one which is of particular interest. It comes from Kalandarpur in Bogra District (Museum No. 661 ; size 32 by $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches). A preliminary account of it has been published by me in the *Annual Report of the Varendra Research Society for* 1925-26 p. 3 of 'Note on Additions.' A detailed account will, I hope, interest scholars.

As will appear from the accompanying illustration (Fig. 1), the sculpture represents a deity wearing a long garland reaching to the knees with four hands bearing respectively *sankha* (conch), *chakra* (discus), *gada* (mace) and *padma* (lotus). He can therefore be no other than Vishnu. Regarding some of his attributes a few remarks are necessary. The lump in the lower right hand evidently represents a lotus-bud. The discus is placed vertically on a lotus, the stalk of which is held by the figure in his upper right hand. In his upper left hand is another lotus-stalk and the mace is laid horizontally on the lotus. Ordinarily, these attributes do not surmount lotuses, but are held directly by the hands, the 'mace' represented as a thick long staff being held in a vertical position. In the present case, however, being placed horizontally on the lotus the mace has been represented as a ferrule with thick ends. The corrugated amalaka pattern at the two ends form the distinctive feature of the symbol for mace. The identify of this attribute will be clear by comparison with a similar image in Rajshahi Museum as noted hereafter. For mace and discus placed on lotus attention may be drawn to two Vishnu images from near Sagar-dighi in Murshidabad District, Bengal, illustrated in the *Handbook to the Sculptures in the Museum of the Bangiya Sahitya-Parishad* (Calcutta, 1922), Pls. XXIV and XXV; also R. D. Banerji, *Banglar Itihas*, vol. I, plates 26 and 27.

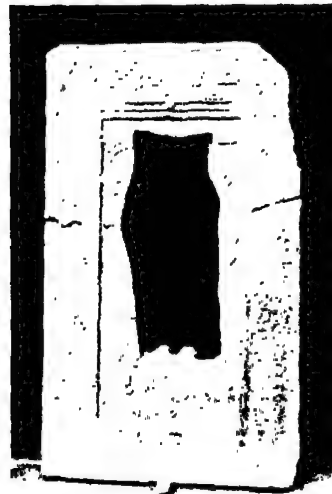
The deity in Fig. 1 has four male attendants. Of them the one that stands next to him on the right carries (above the shoulder) a discus on lotus and the one that stands next to him on the left, a conch similarly resting on lotus. They are to be identified as Ayudhapurushas. Similar Ayudhapurushas appear as attendants of Vishnu instead of his wives Lakshmi and Sarasvati, in the two images from near Sagar-dighi.

What adds considerably to the interest of the sculpture are two small figures namely a two-armed male figure seated in meditation above Vishnu's head and a six-armed dancing male figure below Vishnu's lotus seat. Seated figure occurring in the same composition with Vishnu is a novelty in Bengal sculpture, although it is not rare in the sculptural remains of other provinces. For instance there is quite a number of Vishnu images in the Mathura Museum, in all of which a couple of seated figures appear above the head of Vishnu. They have been identified by Dr. Vogel as Brahma and Siva, and the images have been described as representations of the Hindu trinity (*Catalogue of the Arch. Museum at Mathura*, pp. 94, 98, 99, 102 etc. and cf. a seated figure above the head of a Vaishnavi image, *Ibid*, Pl. XVII, No. D. 6). It is very probable that the present sculpture from North Bengal, which has a seated figure above Vishnu's head and a dancing figure below his lotus-seat, represents the same conception, the seated figure at the top representing the god Brahma and the dancing figure at the bottom the god Siva. Usually Vishnu occupies a position between his two divine *confreres*, and this sculpture is quite in accord with this convention.

This view finds a strange confirmation in a similar sculpture (Museum No. 302) which was brought to the Rajshahi Museum from Mahi-Santosh in Dinajpur District, some 20 miles west of Kalandarpur in 1916 (Fig. 2). This sculpture is sadly mutilated. The middle portion representing the trunk of Vishnu and the upper triangular portion of the back slab are cut away, evidently to adapt the slab for use in a Muhammadan stiucture, as the Arabesque ornamentation on its back clearly shows (Fig. 3). The upper portion, which in all probability contained a seated figure as in the Kalandarpur image is cut away, but the dancing figure at the bottom remains intact showing that the two sculptures depict the same subject, namely the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In the Mahi-Santosh image Vishnu is attended by Lakshmi. Sarasvati and Garuda and holds the mace, which is a tall one. in a vertical position (see Fig. 2). The dancing figure in the Mahi-Santosh sculpture has four hands. while that in the Kalandarpur one has six. But each, it should be noted. holds a bow and arrow as found in the representations of Siva in his *Samharamurti* or 'attitude of destruction' (Cf. Tripurantakamurti in *Elements of Hindu Iconography*. vol. II, Lart 1, p. 168 et seq.). This destructive attitude would be in perfect harmony with the Trimurti conception, for Brahma is supposed to be the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver and Siva, the Destroyer of the world. That the dancing figure represents Siva is deducible also from the fact that in both the sculptures the



1. New Vishnu Image from Kalandarpur
(Bogra District)



2. Back of mutilated Vishnu Image from
Mahi—Santosh
(Dinajpur District)



3. Mutilated Vishnu Image from
Mahi—Santosh



4. Fragment of Dancing Siva Image
from Vikramapore
(Dacca District)

two uppermost arms of the deity on the right and the left are lifted over the head and touch each other. This is exactly how the two uppermost arms of a deity are treated in a sculpture from Vikramapur. Dacca District (Fig. 4, Rajshahi Museum, No. 75) about whose identity as the Dancing Siva there is no doubt.

Both the Vishnu images mentioned above bear donative inscriptions in Proto-Bengali characters of about the 12th century A.D. That on the Kalandarpur image mentions probably the name of a donor *Sadhaka-Lalasingha*. The inscription on the broken image from Mahi-Santosh which contains the names of two donors runs thus : *Om danapati Divo Om danapati Budho. i.e.* 'the donor Divo (Divya) and the donor Budho (Budha)'.

III. The 'Mother and Child' Images of Bengal.

By Niradbandhu Sanyal, M.A.

Among the mediæval sculptures of Bengal not an uncommon group is what is generally known as the 'Mother and Child.' The Museum of the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi contains eleven such specimens e. g. fig. I; the Indian Museum, the Dacca Museum, the Museum of the Bangīya Sāhitya-Parishad have each a few of them. The 'mother' in these sculptures appears as reclining on a bed with a male infant lying by her side keeping a hand on her breast. Her person is covered by a cloth, with a scarf thrown over her left shoulder, and she is also decked in elaborate jewellery. In the right hand she holds an *utpala* (water-lily), the left supports the head. At her feet sits a female figure, shampooing her feet. External to the couch at either end is a female attendant one with a fly-whisk, the other, generally with a fan. At the top of the back-slab appears a number of divine figures, which are, generally, Śiva-linga, Kārttikeya. Ganeśa and Navagraha, besides the Gandharvas on either side. Other figures are also sometimes found in addition. One specimen[1] in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society shows a group of four goddesses besides all the deities mentioned above. One sits cross-legged with folded hands and the remaining are in the *lalita* pose, one in the attitude of worship and the other two, respectively with *sakti* (spear) and *Kamandalu* (water-pourer) and lotus and *Kamandalu*. Another specimen[2] described in the *Catalogue of the Museum of the Bangīya Sāhitya-Parishad* bears figures only of Durgā and Ganeśa on the top of the slab, while below the couch on which the mother is lying are figures of a devotee and various accessories connected with worship, viz., flowers, offering of rice (*naivedya*), lamp, incense-burner, pitcher, conch etc.

Opinions are not at one as to the subject which these sculptures represent. The various identifications suggested in this connection are noted below :—

1. Nativity of Buddha.[3]
2. Nativity of Mahāvīra.[4]
3. Nativity of Ganeśa.[5]
4. Nativity of Krishna.[6]

Few cogent reasons have, however, been adduced in support of any of these different views. The appearance of Brahmanical deities on the top of the

slab negatives the idea of these images being either Buddhist or Jaina. Nothing in them is distinctive enough to justify their identification with the birth-scene of either Buddha[7] or Mahāvīra.[8] So far as the representation of the former is concerned, it is worthy of note that sculptures are known conforming closely to the story of the mystic birth in the Lumbini grove. What, therefore, is the justification to connect the same story with these two entirely different representations ?

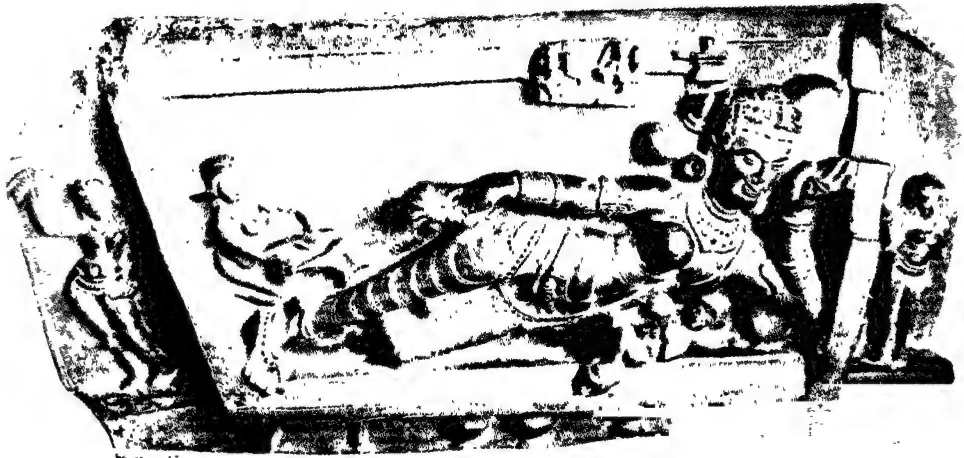
Reference has already been made to an image in the Museum of the Bangīya Sāhitya-Parishad with figures of Durgā and Ganeśa[9] on the top of the back-slab. The late Mr. M. M. Ganguli opined from this that the group exhibits the scene of the birth of Ganeśa. But neither does the composition agree with any Puranic description of the birth of Ganeśa, nor does the mere presence of those attendant deities necessarily lead to such a conclusion. As suggested below the significance of their representation may as well be different. Further if this group be taken to represent the birth of Ganeśa, the figures of the mother and of the child should also be identified respectively with Durgā and Ganeśa, but are there any cognitive traits in them to support such an assumption ?

Now consider the question of accepting the group as the scene of the birth of Krishna. In connection with his article on the *Krishna-janmāshtamī*[10] Prof. Weber points out that the ritual of that festival puts down the representation of the holy nativity as an integral element in it. The existence of such images coeval with the celebration of the Janmāshṭamī may, therefore, be inferred with certainty. Regarding the details of the representation, the following particulars are noted by Weber from the *Bhavishyottara Purāna* compared with other connected texts[11] :— "In the centre (of the inlying house) a couch : on it an image of Devakī as just delivered, slumbering, with Krishna likewise sleeping as a suckling on her breast. Also Yaśodā is to be represented as just delivered of a beautiful girl. Gods and genii of every kind are to be represented as soaring in the air[12]. Vasudeva armed with sword and shield stands at hand; likewise singing Apsaras and dancing Gandharvas." Some of the texts add[13] that the breast of the child should be 'furnished with the holy *srīvatsa* sign' and a text of the *Bhavishyottara Purāna*[14] says that 'the child presses the point of the breast with his hands and looks up repeatedly and lovingly into the face of the mother.'

It will be observed that the above description with a little modification in the details applies to the images under notice. The mother reclining on a couch in the centre of the panel, may be identified with Devakī and the child,



1. Image from Khetlal, Bogra District.
V. R. S. Museum No. 41.



2. Image in Dacca Museum.

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with the newly born Krishna. I have not been able to trace in any image the *srivatsa* sign on the latter's chest, but in an image (Fig. 2.) in the Dacca Museum[15] the child wears a jewel attached to the necklace, which may be taken to represent the *Kaustubha*. Pressing the nipple of the mother's breast, although not actually sucking it, the babe 'looks up repeatedly and lovingly into the face of the mother.' Instances of the child drinking at the mother's breast are not, however, altogether wanting. For a photograph of one such representation I am indebted to Rai Saheb Prayag Dayal. It was brought to the Lucknow Museum from Śivadvāra in the district of Mirzapur. The female attendant shampooing the mother's feet is described as Lakshmī by some of the texts;[16] a short salutation is also addressed to her in the ritual. In a sculpture of the seventh century A.D. from Pathāri, now in the Gwaliar Museum, occurs also the figure of Vasudeva armed with a sword.[17] In this specimen, however, the figures of Lakshmi and of the gods above are absent. In none of these groups is included the figure of Yaśodā, as 'just delivered of a beautiful girl.' But a reference to the incident of Chaṇḍikā warning Kamsa from the sky about his destined end may perhaps be implied in the occurrence of her miniature representation on the top of the back-slab of a sculpture in the Museum of the Bangīya Sāhitya-Parishad mentioned above.

Among the deities depicted on the top of the slab are sometimes also included the Navagrahas, the idea probably being to indicate the benign influence of all the nine planets on the birth of the child. Śiva-linga is found in most cases, probably, as Śiva is one of the principal divinities in the Brahmanical pantheon. Śiva is also stated in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*[18] to have addressed a hymn to Krishna even when he was in the mother's womb. The presence of Ganeśa signifies the allaying of all troubles. The idea of representing gods in the air is a favourite one with the Puranic writers in the narration of heroic tales and the same has sometimes found expression in sculptures when the subject gave the opportunity. As instances, reference may be made to a couple of sculptures in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society—one representing the marriage of Śiva[19] and the other, his *tāndava*.[20] On the back-slab the former exhibits Navagraha, Brahmā, Vishnu, Sūrya, Indra etc. and the latter, Ganeśa, Vishnu, Brahmā, Kārttikeya besides one doubtful figure. Mention may also be made of an image of Mahishamarddinī in the village of Dhānuka (Dist. Faridpur), having at the top of the slab figures of Śiva, Vishnu, Brahmā, Ganeśa and Kārttikeya in relief.[21]

The composition discussed above may thus be taken as the representation

of the nativity of Krishna, as it resembles so closely the description of it in the Purānas; the wide celebration of the Janmāshṭamī is, perhaps, responsible for its having been so largely represented. In the *Śrītattvanidhi*, child Krishna, in the form known as Santāna Gopāla, is stated to be shown in a similar attitude, as lying in the lap of Yaśodā as a suckling on her breast looking often up to her face and pressing the other breast with the tip of his finger.[22] Regarding the posture in which Yaśodā should be exhibited in this scene, this work remains silent. In the birth-scene, Devakī remains reclined, as she is just delivered of her child. No such conception being implied in the other group, there may not be any objection to have in it Yaśodā represented as either seated or reclined. In this connection attention may be drawn to two images in the Mathura Museum,[23] which were found in Mathura, perhaps the richest provenance of the earliest sculptures relating to Krishna-līlā. They have been assigned to the Kushana period and represent a female deity in a squatting posture, fanning a child lying in her lap and looking up to her face. Judging from their resemblance with the description of the *Śrītattvanidki* given above, they may very well be identified as Yaśodā with child Krishna in her lap.

1 *A catalogue of the Archæological relics in the Museum of the V. R. S*, Rajshahi, 1919, p. 29, No.. H (*d*) 6,

2 M. M. Ganguli, *Handbook to the sculptures in the Museum of the Banqīya Sāhitya-Parishad*, Calcutta, 1922 p. 89, No. L (1) 266.

3 *Proc. As. Soc. Beng.*, 1878, p. 123. V. Smith identifies this image from Pathāri with Krisna's nativity *History of Fine Art*, p. 164, pl. XXXVI, see also Coomarswamy cited in n. 17 below.

4 A. K. Coomarswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, London 1927, p. 86.

5 M. M. Ganguli, *loc. cit.*, p. 90.

6 *Proc. As. Soc. Beng.*, 1878, p. 122; Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. XV, p. 102.

7 For the story of Buddha's birth, see *Lalita vistara*, ed. S. Lefmann, Halle, 1902, pp. 82 ff.

8 For the story of the birth of Mahāvīra, see *Kalpa Sutra and Nava Tatva*, transl., J. Stevenson, London, 1848, p. 74 ff.

9 M. M. Ganguli, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

10 *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VI, p. 349.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 173-74.

12 Cf. also *Bhāgavata Purāna*, x. 3. 5-7.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 286-8 .

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

15 I am indebted to Mr. N. K. Bhattasali for a photograph of the image.

16 *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VI, pp. 288, 290.

17 A. K. Coomarswamy, *loc. cit.*, Pl. XLVII, Fig. 178.

18 *Bhāgavat Purāna*, Bangavāsī ed. x. 2. 25 ff.

19 *A cataloque of the Archæological Relics in the Museum of the V. R. S.* p. 9, No. C (d) 1.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 11, No. C (e) 1.

21 I am indebted for this information to Mr. K. N. Dikshit, Supdt., Archæological Survey, Eastern Circle.

22 T. A. G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 1, Pt. 1, pp. 215-16.

23 *Catalogue of the Archæological Museum at Mathura*, Allahabad, 1910, p. 107-2, Nos. E 4, E 5, ; *A. S. R.*, Vol. XX, Pl. IV, 3.

Printed at the COTTON PRESS, 57, Harrison Road, Calcutta.

VARENDRA RESEARCH SOCIETY, RAJSHAHI.

A note on the Arabic & Persian Inscriptions in the Society's Museum.

By S. Sharf-ud-din, M.A.

(a) Arabic Inscriptions on stone.

1. Mahisantosh (Dist. Dinajpur) stone inscription.

Museum No. 314. Face rectangular, $19'' \times 9\frac{1}{2}''$. Lines 2. Characters Tograh (in relief) 3″ broad. Language Arabic.

This inscription was found at the time of excavating a ruined mosque at Mahi-Santosh in Dinajpur District and was presented to the Society by Kumar Sarat Kumar Ray. The block of stone bearing the inscription once formed the pedestal part of a Vishnu image, as the lotus and other decorations at its back indicate. The inscription records that the mosque—evidently the one at Mahi-Santosh—was erected or consecrated on the 9th day of Ramzan in the Hijra year 912 (corresponding to February 1507 A.D.) in the reign of Ala-ud-din Husain Shah, who reigned from 899 to 925 A.H., *i. e.* 1493-1519 A.D. One side of the inscription is chipped off and a few words in the middle of the first line are too intricate to be read. These defects, however, do not detract from the historical value of the record.

The text of the inscription is given at page 7. The translation is as follows :—

(Line 1) The Prophet—may God grant him peace and blessings—has said..............At the time of the powerful ruler Ala-ud-dunia-wa-ud-din Abul Muzaffar Husain Shah Sultan—may God perpetuate his kingdom and authority............

(Line 2)..............Dated the ninth day of the auspicious month of Ramzan of the year 912.

Judging from similar inscriptions of Husain Shah's time, such as the one reproduced in Plate 16 of Mr. R. D. Banerji's *Banglar Itihas Part 2,* the few words in the first line which cannot be read owing to

intricate engraving probably convey the well-known saying of Prophet Muhammad :—man banà masjid an lillàhi banà llàhu lahu bayt an fì 'ljannati (Who builds a mosque for God, God builds a house for him in Paradise).

2. Sultanganj (near Godagari, Dist. Rajshahi) stone inscription.

Museum No. 731. Face rectangular, 4′ 7½″ × 9½″. Lines 4, last three in seven sections each ; Characters Arabic (in relief) 1½″ broad. Language Arabic. No date.

This inscription was found in the village of Sultanganj, P. S. Godagari, Dist. Rajshahi and presented to the Society by Kumar Sarat Kumar Ray. The inscription is a curious one, being engraved in the seven compartments of a block of stone which once formed the lintel of a door, and bears carvings in Hindu style (Fig. 7). The inscription embodies the 256th verse of Chapter II. of *the Quran*, commonly known as Ayatu 'l-kursí or 'the throne verse'.

The text is given at page 7. The translation is as follows :—

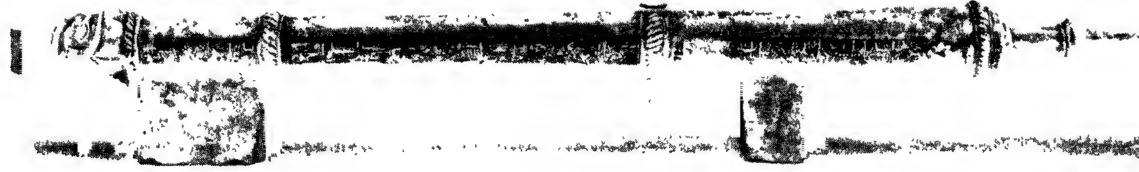
In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

God ! There is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal. Nor slumber seizeth Him nor sleep. His what-so-ever is in the Heaven and what-so-ever is in the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission ? He knoweth what had been before them and what shall be after them ; yet nought of His knowledge shall they grasp, save what He willeth. His throne reacheth over the Heaven and the earth, and the up-holding of both burdeneth Him not. He is the High, the Great.

3. Sonadanga (Dist. Dinajpur) stone inscription.

Museum No. 324. Face triangular, 2′ 9½″ base × 9″ height. Lines 3. Characters Arabic (in relief) 2½″ broad. Language Arabic. No date.

This inscription was found at Sonadanga village in Dinajpur District and presented to the Society by Mr. Devendragati Ray of Balurghat. The block of stone bearing the inscription was evidently fixed over the entrance of some charitable institution. The inscription embodies the 263rd verse of Chapter II. of *the Quran*.



6. Inscribed Bronze Cannon from Shershahi, Dist. Malda



7. Inscribed Lintel from Sultangunj, near Godagari, Dist. Rajshahi

THE INDIAN ART SCHOOL

The text is given at page 7. Its translation is as follows :—

In the name of God, Merciful, the Compassionate.

God Almighty has said :—The likeness of those who expend their wealth for the cause of God is that of a grain of corn which produceth seven ears, and in each ear a hundred grains ; and God will multiply to whom He pleaseth. The Prophet—may God grant him peace and blessings—has said.........

(b) Persian Inscriptions on Bronze Cannon.

1. **Malda** Bronze cannon inscription.

Museum No. 475. Length 4′5″+2½″ stump of 'handle'. Circumference 12″ at the breech and 10″ behind the muzzle which is shaped like a tiger's head. Bore 1½″. Weight 124lbs. Two small trunnions project at the middle.

The inscription is incised in outline and set off by the surface around being indented. It is in one line divided into three sections by raised ornamental bands. The charactrs are Persian 1¾″ broad and the language is Persian. Dated Hijra year 948, corresponding to 1541 A.D. Behind the backsight are engraved in Bengali the figures ৩ ম ৩.

The cannon was found near Malda town and appears to be the one seen by Mr. R. D. Banerji, in the District Magistrate's quarters at Malda, vide *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1911* p. 48. It was presented to the Society by Mr. A. K. Jameson, I.C.S. This cannon, in its make and its inscription, closely resembles other cannon of Sher Shah's, such as the one in the Gauripur palace described by Mr. Banerji in *J. A. S. B. 1911*, p. 44. or No. 1 of the four cannon found in 1909, near Narayangunj, Dacca Dist. and described by Mr. H. E. Stapleton in *J. A. S. B. 1909*, pp. 367-70.

Mr. Stapleton's description is not only the first published but is the most exhaustive and scholarly one that we have of Sher Shah's cannon. A substance of it is, therefore, given below.

Many of the observations apply to the cannon under notice.

"Four [of the cannon] have muzzles shaped like a lion or tiger's head, probably in compliment to the king whose name is found engraved on the first one—Sher Shah, the conqueror of Humayun".

"They were probably used on ships of war (the nuwwārah). Their method of mounting is shown by the remains of the iron forks that still clasp the trunnions of two of the guns. This would permit only of motion up and down in a vertical plane, but the block of wood that carried the prong might in turn have been able to rotate on a vertical axis, thus giving the gun a horizontal motion as well. The butt of each gun was cast with a socket, into which a long handle or rod of iron was fitted to facilitate the aiming of the gun". [In the Malda gun this 'socket' or handle is broken off exposing its iron core. In the gun from Shershahi village, Fig. 6, the bronze 'socket' is in tact with its iron core sticking out.]

"The main inscription on this gun is specially interesting both because a date is given and also for the information afforded by it regarding the arsenal assistants employed by Sher Shah. If Sher Shah thus employed [Rumi or] natives of Asia Minor or Turkey to improve the make of his guns, it seems possible that the marked improvement that occurred in the coinage during his reign may also have originated from the west".

Mr. Stapleton then gives the text of the inscription which differs from the one on the Malda cannon in only two words viz. 'nah' for 'hasht' in the date and 'nikŭyash' for 'bigŭyad' near the end of the inscription.

"The date [949 Hijra] shows that the gun was cast in the next year after Sher Shah had deposed Khizr Khan the first Governor of Bengal after Sher Shah reconquered Gaur in 946 (1539 A.D.). vide *J.A.S.B. 1875* p. 295".

"Immediately behind the backsight occur the figures ৩।৪ the present Bengali method of writing 3 mds. and 14 seers, and behind this again is a [×] mark at the extreme end of the socket. On the lower side of the gun are found three inscriptions. The first, below the muzzle, is scratched in Persian *Shikast*, and gives either the name of the gunner or a subsequent owner, Rif 'at Ghāzi. Another [×] also is seen here, just above the name. At the other end, below the breech, is found in Begali the name Tarap Rājā. This may be taken as the name of the gun, and possibly has reference to some expedition during the sixteenth century into south Sylhet, of which Taraf is an important perganah."

"Just beyond the words Tarap Raja, but upside down are found the figures ২।৬, or in other words, 2 mds 16 seers. Neither this weight, how-

ever, nor the one near the backsight corresponds at all with the actual present weight of the gun which is only 1 maund 27 seers." Mr. Stapleton says that if we take the Sher Shah maund to be 51. 8 lbs. (Thomas' *Chronicles* p. 430) 2 maunds 16 seers would be equal to 1 md. 22 seers of the present weights. On an analysis the metal was found to contain copper 84. 72 per cent, Zinc & Iron 13. 32 per cent, Tin 1. 83 per cent.

The text of the inscription is given at page 7. The last section forms a couplet in the Persian metre *ramal.* The date is one year earlier than that inscribed on the Narayanganj gun. The inscription may be translated as follows :——

In the time of the just emperor Sher Shah—may God perpetuate his kingdom and authority—in the year 948, wrought by Saiyad Ahmad Rumi.

Sher Shah who is just in the world,
May his good name continue for ever.

2. Shershahi (Malda Dist) bronze Cannon inscription.

Museum No. 729, Fig. 6. Length 4′ 5″ + 3½″ projecting handle + 4″ projecting iron core. Circumference 12″ at the breech and 10″ behind muzzle, which is shaped like a tiger's head. Bore 1½″. Weight 132lbs. There are 2 small trunnions at the middle.

The handle with its projecting iron is intact in this cannon. Behind the backsight are engraved in Bengali the figures ৩ম ||||

The inscription on this cannon like that on the Malda one is incised and consists of one line divided into three sections but the characters are a little thinner and smaller and there is an important additional clause, absent in the Malda as well as in other known cannon of Sher Shah's—saying that the cannon was made at the town of Jannatabad (Gaur) at the command of Khwaja Basharat Sultani. Its date also is the Hijra year 948, *i. e.* 1541 A.D.

The cannon was presented to the Society by Srijukta Sudhamayi Devi of Shershai, P. S. Kaliachak, Malda District, through Mr. J. Peddie I. C. S.

The text of the inscription is given at page 7. The translation is as follows :—

In the time of the just emperor Sher Shah—may God perpetuate his kingdom and authority—in the town of Jannatabad, *alias* Gaur, at the command of Khwaja Basharat Sultani, in the year 948—wrought by Saiyad Ahmad Rumi.

Sher Shah who is just in the world,
May his good name continue for ever.

(c) Persian inscriptions on stone.

1. **Sultanganj** (near Godagari, Dist. Rajshahi) stone inscription.

Museum No. 189. This block of stone formed the right half of an arch-shaped door lintel. Present shape irregular, surface about 16″ high × 2′ broad. The inscription is in one line on a curve. Character (in relief) Persian 3″ broad. Language Persian. No date.

The inscription was found in the village of Sultanganj, P.S. Godagari, Dist. Rajshahi and presented to the Society by Kumar Sarat Kumar Ray. The lotus leaf carving at the back of the stone shows that it originally formed the pedestal of a Hindu image. The inscription which is a fragmentary one is decorated with lotuses carved in Muslim style.

The text is given at page 7. It may be translated as follows :—

"O God ! grant us safety and protection from the calamities due to the revolutions of the spheres".

The text indicates that the prayer was inscribed at the gate of some private house. It is still the custom among Muhammadans to write or hang such prayers over the gates of houses, especially at the time of an epidemic.

2. **Vansihari** (Dist. Dinajpur) stone inscription.

Museum No. 70. Face square, $10\frac{1}{2}'' \times 10\frac{1}{2}''$. Lines 7. Characters Persian (in relief) 1″ broad. Language Persian. No date.

This inscription was found near Vansihari in Dinajpur Dist. and presented to the Society by Mr. Sris Chandra Bhattacharya, (of the Public Works Department, Bengal).

The inscription is fragmentary, having been clipped all round and made into a pillar cap, as its present carvings on the edges and the mortice hole at its centre go to show. Only two words can be read "gurikht" and "Khwashāmad", the rest are unintelligible.

Texts of Inscriptions.

(a) Arabic Inscriptions on stone.

1. Mahisantosh Inscription.

قال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم.....في عهد السلطان المتين علاء الدنيا و الدين ابي المظفر حسين شاه سلطان خلد الله ملكه و سلطانه......

......مورخا في التاسع من شهر مبارك رمضان سنة اثنا عشر و تسعمائة......

2 Sultanganj Inscription No. 1. (Throne Verse.)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الله لا اله + الا هو الحى + القيوم لا + تاخذه سنة + و لا نوم له + ما في السموات + و ما في الارض + من ذا الذى + يشفع عنده + الا باذنه + يعلم ما بين + ايديهم و ما + خلفهم و لا + يحيطون بشيء + من علمه الا + بما شاء وسع + كرسيه + السموات و الارض + و لايؤده + حفظهما و هو + العلى العظيم *

3 Sonadanga Inscription.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

قال الله تعالى مثل الذين ينفقون اموالهم في سبيل الله كمثل حبة انبتت سبع سنابل في كل سنبلة مائة حبة و الله يضاعف لمن يشاء قال النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم

(b) Persian Inscriptions on bronze cannon.

1 Malda cannon Inscription.

در عهد بادشاه عادل شیر شاه خلد الله ملکه و سلطانه + در تاریخ نهصد چهل هشت عمل سید احمد رومي شیر شاه عادل کاندر جهان + نام بگوید بماند جاودان

2 Shershahi cannon Inscription.

در عهد بادشاه عادل شیر شاه خلد الله ملکه و سلطانه + در شهر جنتا باد عرف گور فرماشد خواجه بشارت سلطانی در تاریخ نهصد چهل هشت عمل سید احمد رومی +

شیر شاه عادل کاندر جهان نام بگوید بماند جاودان

(c) Persian Inscription on stone.

1 Sultanganj Inscription No. 2.

امن و امان باد ز افتهاء چرخی + یا الله -



II. Adi-Buddha in the Eastern School of Art.

The cult of Ādi-Buddha was studied by Brian Hodgson[1] during the early part of the nineteenth century, and subsequently, by other scholars. It is intimately related to, and forms a special phase of, Mahāyāna Buddhism,[2] which preaches that Buddhas are deified and eternal beings, possessing the 'three-bodies' (tri-kāya), viz. dharma-kāya, sambhogakāya and nirmāṇa-kāya, of which the first constitutes the real nature of all Buddhas, the second represents a state of blissfulness and the third is nothing but an illusory body, which, not only Śākyamuni, but in fact every Buddha, assumes at times. Thus the Mānushī or 'human' Buddhas like Śākyamuni, are regarded as magical bodies, or reflections, of the five Dhyānī or 'Celestial Buddhas'.

The special feature of the cult of Ādi-Buddha is that it places even at the head of the Dhyāni-Buddhas, a primordial being (Ādi-Buddha), from whom emanate or proceed by means of dhyāna, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This cult differs from the Great Vehicle cheifly in this that, whereas the latter recognises the historicity of Śākyamuni and the four other human Buddhas, without confusing them with the *nirmitakas* or 'magical creations', the former ignores their historicity altogether and treats all of them as magical creations of Ādi-Buddha in a moment of his trance.

The germ of this cult is traceable, according to Kern[3] and Waddell,[4] in the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka (*circa* 1st century A. D.), although in a strictly dogmatic sense it occurs in a much later period. The deification of Śākyamuni to the extent of a primordial being[5] who is eternal, and at the same time the belief that he had no material body in the human world but only an illusory one in the strictly docetistic sense, were probably worked out by the idealistic Mahāsāṁghikas under the influence of a Brahmanic belief in the existence of an 'all-god' like Brahmā. The full-fledged cult of Ādi-Buddha or Svayambhū, as he is called in Nepāl, is represented by four

1 *Language, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*, p. 35ff.

2 Louis de la vallee Poussin on 'Mahayana' and 'Adi-Buddha'—*Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. 8, p. 330ff and Vol. I, p. 93ff.

3 'Lotus of the True Law', *SBE.*, Vol. XXI, p. XXV.

4 *Buddhism of Tibet*, pp. 126, 130.

5 Poussin on 'Docetism' (Buddhism)—*Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. 4, p 835 ff.

systems of philosophy, and it appeared in that country, according to Grünwedel,[6] between the 12th and 13th century A. D. The most popular treatise dealing with Ādi-Buddha is the Bṛihat-Svayambhū-Purāṇa (Bid. Ind.) the date of which is probably somewhat later. But the doctrine is prominently mentioned in earlier treatises like the Kāraṇḍa-vyūha,[7] which was translated into Chinese between 980—1001 A. D., and in the works of the Kālachakrayāna, e. g. the Laghu-Kālachakraṭīkā, copied in Bengal during the reign of Harivarman (10th century A. D.).[8] It appears from the latter work that 'Kālachakra' was the name given to 'Paramādi-Buḍdha' or 'the great primordial Buddha,' who is described as 'Buddhānāṁ janakaḥ,' i. e. 'the father of Buddhas,' 'trikāyasahitaḥ,' i. e. 'having three bodies,' 'traikālya-saṁvedakaḥ,' i. e. 'one who knows the three kālas,' 'sarvajña,' i. e. 'omniscient' and 'advaya,' i. e. 'non-dual.' As this conception is found current in Eastern India, during the Pāla period when it was probably unknown in Nepāl and Tibet, it may be presumed that it was engendered here and later on introduced into other countries.

There is also iconographic evidence, which is at least as early as the Pāla period, of the existence of this cult in Eastern India, although its exact significance has not yet been perceived by scholars. According to Getty, in Nepāl, "the Ādi-Buddha is always represented as a 'crowned Buddha,' that is to say, that although he is a Buddha, he wears the five-leaved crown as well as the other traditional ornamets of a Dhyāni-Bodhisattva, and dressed in princely garments.' (*Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 3). It is, of course, not known why Ādi-Buddha should have these embellishments. The beginning of this iconographic conception, however, of a jewelled or crowned Buddha is to be found in a number of sculptures which have frequently turned up in Bihār.[9] That the figures are to be identified with Gautama Śākyamuni appears from the fact that the scenes of his life are carved on the back-slab of several specimens. The anomalous position of a monk in royal garb remained hitherto unintelligible and this led scholars to describe such Buddha images often as 'uncanonical' [10] and often as presen-

6 *Buddhist Art in India*, p. 198.

7 R. L. Mitra, *Sans. Buddhist Literature*, p. 93, and Getty, *Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 3.

8 H. P. Sastri, *Descriptive Cat. Sans. MSS., ASB.*, Vol. I (1917), pp. 79-80.

9 T. Bloch, *Suppl. Cat. Arch. Sec. Ind. Mus.* (1911), pp. 62-63. Also Cohn, *Indisch Plastik*, Pl. 26

10 Daya Ram Sahni, *Cat. Sar. Mus.* (1914), p 103.

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4. Jewelled Buddha from Dist. Rajshahi.



5. Jewelled Buddha from Bihar.



6. Jewelled Buddha from Bihar.

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ting 'unorthodox forms.'[11] Ramāprasād Chanda,[12] to whom we owe the latest treatment of the subject, thinks that "this group of crowned figures evidently represent a new type of Buddha that originated in Eastern India in the Pāla period." Somewhat earlier examples are probably those reproduced by Cunningham in his *Mahabodhi*, Pl. XXVI, fig. 3. In the light of Getty's important observation quoted above these figures may now be identified with Adi-Buddha.

I shall in this connection refer, by way of illustration, to the sculptures in the Rajshahi Museum, which belong to this class. They are: No. $\frac{\text{A (a) 14}}{254}$ which was found in the Rajshahi District and Nos. $\frac{\text{I (a) 30}}{431}$, $\frac{\text{I (a) 13}}{414}$, $\frac{\text{I (a) 13}}{414}$, $\frac{\text{I (a) 42}}{443}$ and $\frac{\text{I (a) 44}}{445}$, which came from Bihar. In $\frac{\text{A (a) 14}}{245}$, of which unfortunately the head is missing, Buddha is represented as sitting in 'the earth-touching attitude' and wearing jewelled ornaments like bangles; bracelets, necklace, etc. (Fig 4). No. $\frac{\text{I (a) 30}}{431}$ shows the 'jewelled' Buddha in the same attitude with several scenes from his life depicted on the back-slab. No. $\frac{\text{I (a) 13}}{414}$ is a miniature votive stūpa with four figures of the 'jewelled' Buddha carved around it. Two of these are in 'the preaching attitude'; the third one is seated with an almsbowl on his lap held by two hands; while the fourth one is in 'the earth-touching attitude.' (Fig 5). In No. $\frac{\text{I (a) 42}}{443}$ the 'jewelled' Buddha appears in the centre with a seated Buddha in the garb of a monk on either side and two other similarly dressed Buddhas are placed above the shoulders of the central figure. (Fig. 6). This undoubtedly represents the scene of the Great Miracle at Śrāvastī.[13] No. $\frac{\text{I (a) 44}}{445.}$ shows the 'jewelled' Buddha 'in the preaching attitude', and has on the pedestal two deer, symbolising, of course, the Mṛigadāva scene.

Regarding a few sculptures of the type described above Theodore Bloch[14] and Ramāprasād Chanda[15] have pointed out that in those pieces that show the 'crowned Buddha' in the centre and various scenes from his life in the back-slab, he sometimes appears in the latter place in

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11 Coomarswamy, *Bull. Boston Mus.*, 1924, No. 132, p. 30

12 *Ann. Rep. ASI.*, 1921-22, p. 105 and Pl. 37.

13 Cf. Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, pl. XXIII. fig. 1.

14 *Op. cit.*, p. 63.

15 *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

his monkish garb and that in certain other instances he appears in princely garments in both the places. The origin of such treatment has remained obscure up till now. But if we take the sculptures to be representations of Ādi-Buddha, there remains practically no difficulty in interpreting these otherwise unusual features. According to this cult, as Hodgson [16] has said, Ādi-Buddha is supposed to have produced a Bodhisattva 'who having migrated through the three worlds, and through all six forms of animate existence......appeared at last as Śākyasiṁha to teach mankind the real sources of happiness and misery'. With this theory would correspond those sculptures which represent a 'crowned' or 'jewelled' Buddha, i. e., the Primordial Buddha, in the centre of the composition and a number of scenes from the life of Gautama (who is his *nirmitaka* or 'magical body') at the back showing evidently the emanation of the latter from the former and the great power of Eternal Buddhahood. To the docetistic tendency was gradually sacrificed 'the actuality of Buddha's life,' and some of the Buddhist thinkers "laid special stress upon the eight (or four) important incidents in his life as the 'signs' (lakṣaṇa) of his Buddhahood." [17] And docetism reached its culmination when Śākyamuni was given a place in the unreal mythological domain and thoroughly identified with the Primordial Buddha, who never came down on earth. This phase of docetism is, I think, attested by those sculptures in which both Ādi-Buddha, who occupies the centre of the slab and Śākyamuni, who occupies the back-slab, are represented in a similar way, having the crown, necklace, bangles and other ornaments. Figures of Buddha decorated with such ornaments have been found not only in Eastern India, Nepal and Tibet but also in Cambodia, Laos and Burma.[18] It is not improbable that the idea of representing Ādi-Buddha with personal decorations was borrowed from the Eastern School of Indian Art, during the rule of the Pālas of Bengal.

31-3-27. N. G. M.

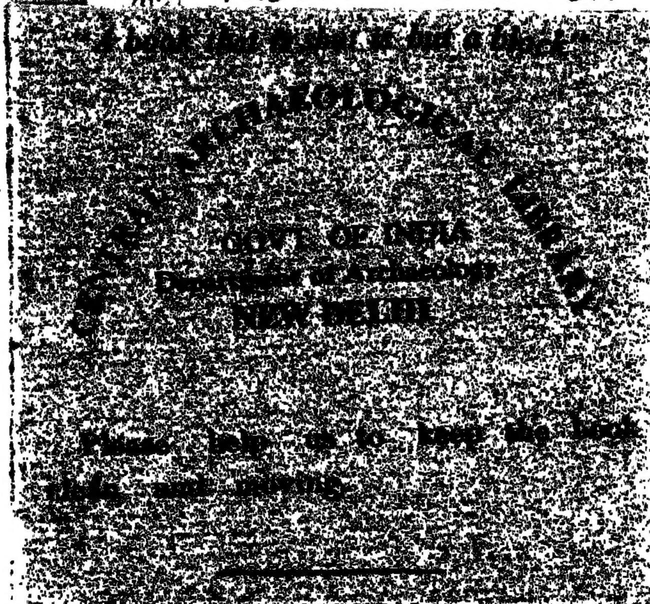
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16 *Op. cit.*, p. 82.

17 Poussin. *Ency. Rel. Eth.*. Vol. 4, p. 839.

18 See illustration of a Burmese 'crowned Buddha' in *Ann. Rep. ASI.*. 1913-14. Part I. Pl XII. fig. (b).

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